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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003895

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: TAL AFAR RECONSTRUCTION PROCESS, CONSTITUTION
DISCUSSED WITH DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires David M. Satterfield for reasons 1.4 (a), (b), (d)

1. (C//REL MNFI) SUMMARY. Charge d'Affaires (CDA) and MNF-I Deputy Commanding General (DCG) met with Deputy Prime Minister Rawsh Shaways (who is the senior government official in Iraq during the absence of Prime Minister Jaafari) to discuss the situation in Tal Afar, and the prospects for further discussions with Sunni factions on the language of the constitution. Shaways was urged to appoint a Sunni Arab minister to head the reconstruction effort in Tal Afar and said that he would do so. He agreed that one last effort should be made to close the gap that remains on the constitution between the Sunnis on the one hand and the Shias and Kurds on the other. If this fails, all efforts should then be focused on assuring a successful referendum process. Shaways also expressed condolences on the death earlier in the day in Mosul of a State Department security officer. END SUMMARY.

TAL AFAR RECONSTRUCTION

2. (C//REL MNFI) CDA Satterfield and DCG Brims called on Shaways at his home the evening of September 19. Brims provided a briefing on the current state of affairs in Tal Afar. Decisive combat operations have concluded and the reconstruction phase has begun. Families are beginning to return to their homes and as they pass U.S. military checkpoints they are being provided with food and water. A claims office has been established to begin processing compensation claims, and U.S. troops have already begun to work on public works projects such as repairing water lines, police stations, and schools. There are adequate supplies of food and steps are being taken to coordinate their delivery. A team from the Iraqi Transitional Government (ITG) visited Tal Afar September 20 to continue to coordinate efforts between the town, the provincial government, and the ITG.

3. (C//REL MNFI) Brims stressed the importance of assuring the success of the reconciliation process in Tal Afar, not only between the communities within the city, but also between the officials of the town, the province, and the ITG. A key step to moving the reconciliation process forward is to fulfill the promises the ITG has made to pay compensation to people who are entitled. This would be an act of good faith and send a powerful message that the ITG is there for all Iraqis, not just certain communities. Reconstruction can begin quickly and it is critical that important momentum not be lost. The U.S. and the ITG both have funds they have made available and projects they can begin immediately. The other key issue is the rapid and equitable reconstitution of a police force that is representative of the community. A key problem is the fact that the Sunnis continue to feel aggrieved by what has taken place.

4. (C//REL MNFI) CDA echoed Brims' assessment of the situation and explained that the Sunnis we hear from have substantive concerns, such as the conduct of the predominantly Shia police commando units that were sent into the city, and that we take these concerns seriously. But, perhaps more importantly, the Sunnis also have concerns about the level of representation and the role they're playing in the decision make process and the operation. We are sensitive to these concerns as well, as we must be, as some Sunnis are using the Tal Afar operation as justification for carrying out car bombing attacks in Baghdad or as an excuse to launch a war on the Shia. The ITG needs to make it clear that the Tal Afar operation was and is what it was advertised as from the beginning: a transparent operation aimed at routing dangerous terrorists, not an assault on Sunnis. Accordingly, we believe it important that the reconstruction efforts have a Sunni Arab face, and recommended that Minister of Industry and Minerals Osama al-Nujeifi, an Arab Sunni from Mosul, be placed in charge, instead of the Minister of Planning, Barham Salih, a Sunni Kurd. We recognize that Nujeifi has spoken out against the operation, but the operation has ended and he should be interested in playing a key role in the reconstruction efforts.

5. (C//REL MNFI) Shaways replied that he agreed Nujeifi is a good candidate for the position, but when he had raised this idea earlier he encountered opposition from the Minister

of Defense, Saadoun Dulime, a Sunni himself. CDA and DCG undertook to discuss this with Dulime, and urged Shaways to make the decision rapidly in order to maintain momentum and to avoid festering recriminations about the reconciliation and reconstruction process. Shaways agreed that he would made the switch the next day, September 20.

16. (C//REL MNFI) In a telephone conversation on September 21, Shaways informed CDA that Nujeifi had accepted the position and that a Mininsterial Decree had been issued on September 20 appointing him to the reconstruction committee.

ONE LAST TRY ON CONSTITUTION

17. (C//REL MNFI) CDA asked Shaways if had had any contact with Sunni leaders about the language of the constitution subsequent to their last meetings in Irbil. Shaways replied there had been no new contacts. CDA told him that it seems that positions on the constitution have hardened and that we all need to be realistic about what is achievable. Nevertheless, time is running out and perhaps one last push should be made to arrive at consensus on as many issues as possible. Shaways agreed that of the several Sunni demands remaining, perhaps two are negotiable, those dealing with the threshold for amendments, and the language issue. CDA acknowledged that while we have heard nothing encouraging from the Sunnis, all parties owe it to themselves to make one last effort. The Ambassador will do whatever he can to reach out to all parties to assist them to arrive at an outcome that is the best possible, taking into account the differing positions. Shaways agreed that one last effort should be made, but that if it failed everyone should accept the situation as it is and concentrate on moving the referendum process forward.

CONDOLENCES FOR LOSS OF RSO

18. (U) At the conclusion of the meeting, Shaways expressed to the CDA his condolences for the death earlier in the day in Mosul of a State Department Diplomatic Security Officer, killed in the line of duty.

Satterfield